

Direction: CITY1648.DSS

Chairperson Erickson called the regular meeting of the Plan and Zoning Commission to order at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, September 12, 2016, in the Council Chambers of the West Des Moines City Hall, located at 4200 Mills Civic Parkway, in West Des Moines.

Roll Call: Andersen, Brown, Costa, Crowley, Erickson, Hatfield, Southworth.....Present

Item 1 - Consent Agenda

Item 1a - Minutes of the meeting of August 29, 2016

Chairperson Erickson asked for any comments or modifications to the August 29, 2016 minutes.

Moved by Commissioner Costa, seconded by Commissioner Crowley, the Plan and Zoning Commission approved the August 29, 2016 meeting minutes.

Vote: Andersen, Brown, Costa, Crowley, Erickson, Hatfield, Southworth.....Yes
Motion carried.

Item 2 – Public Hearings

There were no Public Hearing items on the agenda.

Item 3 – Old Business

There were no Old Business items on the agenda.

Item 4 – New Business

Roger's Farm West Apartment Homes, Southeast corner of Stagecoach Drive and South Jordan Creek Parkway – Approval of a site plan to construct a 522 unit apartment development – Edward Rose Millennial Development, LLC – SP-003096-2016

Commissioner Costa recused himself from participation in this item due to a potential conflict of interest.

Kirsten Rimes, Edward Rose Millennial Development, 6101 Newport Road, Kalamazoo, Michigan, requested site plan approval to begin construction on an apartment development. An informational brochure describing the company profile, site features, and property photographs was distributed to the Commission members.

Ms. Rimes continued by giving a brief overview of the proposal. There are currently two Edward Rose developments within the Des Moines area, one in Ankeny with 504 units and the other in Grimes which will have 384 units when completed. The proposed West Des Moines property includes 39.8 acres located at the SE corner of Jordan Creek Parkway and Stagecoach Drive. The property is zoned residential-medium density and will have a density of 13.1 units per acre. The proposal is for 522 apartment units with one and two bedroom options. These units will be housed in 15 buildings; one will be a 24-unit building, another a 30-unit building, and the remainder 13 buildings will have 36 units. In the center of the property, a community and manager leasing office building is planned. The buildings will be situated primarily along the south property line with views to the south, as well as clustered and centered around a pond which will be used for storm water management and an aesthetic amenity. Approximately, 69% of the site will remain open space once the buildings are completed.

Ms. Rimes provided the building elevations stating that the layout of the buildings are front-to-back, and that the units run the width of the building with balconies and patios located to the rear side of the building. A combination of materials will be used consisting of stone and brick, and vinyl and shake siding with different neutral and earth tone color schemes. Garages will be offered in three different styles and mimic the materials used on the buildings. Amenities on the property will include a pool, fitness center, and a community room. Ms. Rimes summarized by stating that the intent was to complete one building at a time with the entire project taking about four years to complete with the hope of beginning construction in Spring 2017.

Ms. Rimes stated that the applicant is currently working with staff regarding easement and antenna tower issues.

Commissioner Crowley asked about the antenna tower. Ms. Rimes replied that the proposal was to install a tower to provide free over-the-air television service to all tenants.

Planner Portz added that the applicant had requested a deferral of the parking requirements until such time there was a demonstrated need. The development would be providing 891 parking spaces and 1,037 parking spaces are required; thus, the property would be 146 stalls short. An area has been identified on the site plan that could accommodate additional future parking.

Commissioner Southworth inquired about using the word “shall” and not using mandatory language. Commissioner Portz commented that there was no specific reason for the language as written, but more of an acknowledgement for the applicant. He also commented that the fire department needs to ensure that there is an emergency access during construction.

Chairperson Erickson asked if anyone from the audience would like to speak to this item; seeing none, asked for continued discussion or a motion.

Moved by Commissioner Crowley, seconded by Commissioner Brown, the Plan and Zoning Commission adopt a resolution recommending the City Council approve the Site Plan to construct 522 apartment units, a clubhouse and associated site improvements, subject to the applicant meeting all City Code requirements and the following:

1. The applicant acknowledging that appropriate access drives, acceptable to the Fire Marshal must be in place prior to issuance of building permits.
2. The applicant acknowledging that useable roadways necessary to access a dwelling building as determined by the Fire Marshal will need to be available prior to issuance of any occupancy permits, including temporary occupancy permits for dwellings within each building.
3. The applicant acknowledging that if future phases are not constructed, or not constructed in a timely fashion, the assigned building numbering may need to be adjusted. Said adjustments may affect buildings already occupied which will result in address changes for the residents.
4. City Council granting a deferral of the installation of 146 parking spaces required until such time that the need for all or part of the deferred parking is warranted as determined by vehicles parking on the grass or other non-designated parking areas or parking off-site is occurring due to the lack of available parking stalls. Prior to implementation of additional parking to satisfy the deferred parking stalls, the applicant shall submit and receive approval of a Minor Modification Level 2 application to the City identifying the location and engineering details for the stalls to be implemented and impacts of the installation on storm water management facilities within the site.

5. The applicant acknowledging and agreeing that the proposed over-the-air television transmission tower is not approved as a part of this site plan approval. Review and approval of this tower will be conducted separately from the Roger's Farm West Apartment Homes site plan review.
6. Prior to any building permit being issued for the site, the applicant shall dedicate to the City by fee title an adequate amount of ground at the intersection of Stagecoach Drive and South Jordan Creek Parkway to contain the existing public sidewalk and the existing traffic signal cabinet within the public right-of-way.
7. Prior to any occupancy, including temporary occupancy permits for any dwelling within the site being issued, a Parkland Dedication Agreement for the construction of public trails on the property shall be executed by the applicant and submitted to the City for approval and recordation.
8. Prior to any occupancy, including temporary occupancy permits for any dwelling within the site being issued, a 40' pedestrian easement document shall be executed by the applicant and submitted to the City for approval and recordation.
9. Prior to any occupancy, including temporary occupancy permits for any dwelling within the site being issued, the Storm Water Management Facility Maintenance Agreement applicable to the site shall be executed by the applicant and submitted to the City for approval and recordation.

Vote: Andersen, Brown, Costa, Crowley, Erickson, Hatfield, Southworth.....Yes
Motion carried.

Item 5 – Staff Reports

Item 5a – Historic West Des Moines Master Plan

Mike Hoffman, Teska Associates, provided a history of the Historic West Des Moines Master Plan creation, revision, and intent of the plan. He has been working with the City on this plan for about a year. A map was provided with boundaries along Railroad Avenue and Grand Avenue noted in gray. The Valley Junction area is very desirable and a major asset for the City, and the intent of the plan is to help continue making this a great and vibrant district.

Mr. Hoffman stated that he has engaged the community in discussions by including business owners, school officials, as well as kids, seniors, focus groups, etc. He attended community events and installed an interactive website where suggestions could be placed. Three community workshops were held. Design issues, economic factors, and spending power for the area were noted. He took into consideration all recommendations to ensure that they were appropriate and a fit for West Des Moines.

Mr. Hoffman gave an overview of the plan and elaborated on various topics:

What is Historic West Des Moines – An eclectic collection of small shops and restaurants without a single retail or restaurant chain located in the core downtown area. Valley Junction is a unique part of the community with unique offerings; a great place to live with opportunities for work and play. A special gathering place where the City of West Des Moines began.

Celebrate the story of WDM. Mr. Hoffman suggested there be story boards, historical displays, storytelling events, and walking tours of West Des Moines where school children and visitors could gain knowledge of the area's history.

Business growth – Mr. Hoffman suggested that the side streets could be activated, particularly Maple and Elm Streets, with a continued focus on current business while providing support for future business and transition planning. A cultural and entertainment mix could be promoted, and a new civic space identified to allow for indoor performances year round.

Residential Mix and Choice – Addition of upper story apartments was frequently mentioned in the fact finding process. Some of the buildings need work, and it was suggested that the City could provide incentives to ensure this happens. Mr. Hoffman stated that there was no suggestion to tear down structures, but to identify opportunities for more choices while maintaining the character of the area. He commented that the City's Pattern Book was available and offered valuable guidelines on how to add an addition, follow green building practices, etc. He encouraged the community to follow these existing guidelines. Community gardens were discussed and working with existing neighborhood organizations for implementation was suggested.

Business District Character and Streetscape – There appears to be a need for improved outdoor seating and dining. Street cross sections are wide and could be widened for additional seating opportunities. "Parklets" (small temporary areas that fit within an existing parking space) could be created for additional seating options for a restaurant or café which could be installed in the summer and taken out in winter. Public art to include murals needs to be placed in strategic locations to enliven the area.

Long-term suggestions – Economic and environmental sustainability are keys to long-term prosperity and resiliency for the area. From rain gardens to efficient lighting and green building practices, a number of measures were outlined. Installation of safer pedestrian zones and providing good flow for groups to walk through the area was mentioned, as well as widening sidewalks by narrowing the roadway drive isle. Along Maple Street, install a design more like a plaza and have the sidewalk merge with the street along with enhanced landscaping. Images were provided where this has been implemented.

Key Sites Identified – Mr. Hoffman stated that opportunity sites were underutilized or could be re-sued for potential redevelopment. The Phenix site was mentioned, as well as others mostly located on Maple Street, Vine, and 5th Avenue. An aerial view of the Phenix School Site was provided. The playground and parking lot off 6th Street is to be transformed and the existing building will be redeveloped. Mr. Hoffman elaborated that south of Railroad (Site 23) there could be mixed use activity with commercial and apartments. Very frequently, it was mentioned that there could be a better connection between the levy trail and the Valley Junction business district.

Investment and future development – The economics of rehabbing an existing building was looked at and found that there was a gap in financing options. Incentives need to be identified for this to happen in this area. It was expressed over and over again that more restaurants were needed which would be expensive. To install a commercial kitchen with grease interceptors and fire suppression, all add to the expense.

Parking – Mr. Hoffman suggested enhanced directional signs, maintaining existing parking levels, and developing additional street parking on 5th Street. He was not in favor of constructing parking garages nor tearing down other structures to provide more parking. He noted that additional handicapped parking was needed throughout the area.

Catalyst Activities – Mr. Hoffman expressed the importance of taking some action soon so as not to have the plan placed on a shelf and forgotten. It was mentioned that the opening of a restaurant, the pop-up of a temporary use space, or installation of a mural would have a big impact.

How do we get there: Mr. Hoffman stated that implementation of this plan would take partnerships and collaboration with the City, the Historic Valley Junction Foundation, school district, developers, residents, private investors, etc. all of which are key to this process. It would be important to keep the steering committee involved by remaining active and meeting on a regular basis.

Sign Regulation - Mr. Hoffman suggested that it would be beneficial to modify certain sections of City Code. For example, sign regulations need to be changed to allow for blade signs and sidewalk signs which would make sense for this particular area. Also, Mr. Hoffman commented that two sites south of Railroad Avenue are zoned manufacturing and could be rezoned when a specific development proposal was brought forward.

Mr. Hoffman informed that Commissioners that this item would be going forward to the City Council as Public Hearing item at their Monday, September 19, 2016 meeting which begins at 5:30 p.m.

A summary video was played for the Commissioners that recapped this presentation.

Commissioner Hatfield thanked Mr. Hoffman for all his efforts.

Commissioner Costa asked who owned the Phenix site and was informed that the City was the owner.

Given the population base for the area, Chairperson Erickson asked for comment on senior housing and “aging in place.” Mr. Hoffman responded that there was an effort to keep the area affordable. Also, there are incentives (tax credits) to allow people to stay in their homes. Because there was a relatively new senior project built adjacent to this area and there is not a lot of developable land in Valley Junction, there was no proposal for a specific senior development.

Chairperson Erickson asked about the plans for the Phenix site.

Housing Planner Christine Gordon provided that the City purchased the entire block where Phenix is located over a year ago from the WDM school district. With plans to redevelop the area, the City is currently working on a master plan for the site. Potentially, the Phenix building would be turned into 17 family apartments and sold at market rate with 6th Street developing into single family or a mix use to include townhomes.

Chairperson Erickson inquired about Maple Street being utilized as a civic plaza with the idea that this would be a primary event space, and how would performances work differently than the current stage at Railroad Park. Mr. Hoffman stated that the street would be closed off and a temporary stage would be installed at one end or the other. Chairperson Erickson suggested that maybe a permanent solution be identified if the function was only one night a week.

Chairperson Erickson mentioned the issue of grease trap requirements for restaurants. A current problem is that grease traps are often oversized, inactive, and can create an odor problem. He suggested that the City create a regional grease trap or multiple site traps in a parking lot off to the back, as opposed to the front. With access to a grease trap, restaurants may locate to the area.

Item 6 - Adjournment

Chairman Erickson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by Commissioner Hatfield, seconded by Commissioner Crowley, to adjourn the meeting.

Vote: Andersen, Brown, Costa, Crowley, Erickson, Hatfield, Southworth.....Yes
Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Craig Erickson, Chairperson

Kimberly Taylor, Recording Secretary